

12-31-1976

# Summary of Facts and Circumstances

San Dewayne Francisco

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## SUMMARY OF FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

CAPTAIN SAN D. FRANCISCO, ~~000-336-5087~~ FV

1. Colonel Joseph C. Morrison, aircraft commander, and Captain San D. Francisco, pilot, comprised the crew of an F-4D aircraft that departed Udorn Airfield, Thailand, at 1156, 25 November 1968, to escort an RF-4C aircraft on a photographic reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. There was almost a solid overcast with cloud bases at 3,000 feet and tops at 5,000 feet. Visibility was about five miles. At about 1245, when they were approximately 28 miles west-southwest of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, one of the crew members of the escort aircraft reported it had been hit. The RF-4C climbed to altitude where the aircraft commander notified the Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC) that his escort aircraft had been shot down and they alerted Search and Rescue (SAR) forces. The RF-4C crewmen observed no ejections nor did they establish radio contact with the F-4D crew; however, beeper signals were heard. Shortly thereafter, radio contact with Colonel Morrison was established. He reported that he was all right. Colonel Morrison's location and his parachute were spotted near the wreckage of his burning aircraft within 700 yards of an enemy encampment, about 25 miles west-southwest of Dong Hoi. No signs of Captain Francisco were observed; however, two responses were received to calls placed to him. The responses were extremely garbled and could not be positively identified as having been transmitted by Captain Francisco. Heavy ground fire and darkness prevented an attempt to rescue Colonel Morrison. At first light on 26 November 1968, voice contact was again established with Colonel Morrison and he stated he was all right, but no contact was made with Captain Francisco. Dense cloud coverage prevented any attempt to rescue Colonel Morrison at the time of contact. Later, when the weather improved, radio contact could not be re-established with him. The search was terminated at 1130, 26 November 1968, when further efforts to contact the officers failed and the weather again deteriorated. On the same day, the North Vietnamese claimed, in radio and newspaper reports, that an F-4C was shot down over Quang Binh Province on 25 November 1968, and the pilots captured. Although no names were mentioned, the date, type of aircraft, and location coincide with the incident involving Colonel Morrison and Captain Francisco.

ATC-1



[REDACTED]

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to scattered at this time. The Gunfighter flight with napes and high-drags was still holding in the area. There was also a Zebra flight on station with CBU-24 and M-117's. We recommended that the Jolly's be brought in from the Northwest, from over a region of rugged Karst with no roads. This approach would also give them a screen of clouds. The cloud deck ended just north of the survivor's location and they could drop right down onto the ridge he was on. This put them the maximum possible distance away from both the roads and the known gun sites. Sandy 1 and 2 called for Sandy 7 to bring Jolly Green 19 and 20 into area at 1735, however, the other two Jolly Greens were left in their orbit in Laos. Because of this, when Jolly Green 20 was hit with small arms fire, there was insufficient daylight remaining for another attempt. Misty 71 also arrived in the area as Misty 41 was leaving for a tanker. Enroute back from the tanker Misty 41 monitored the progress as Sandy 1 led Jolly Green 20 to the survivor. As Jolly Green 20 came to a hover, he received small arms fire from both sides. He took 5 hits through the floor and withdrew from the area, escorted by Jolly Green 19. As previously stated, since the other pair of Jolly Greens were held out of country, there was insufficient daylight remaining for another attempt. The time was approximately 1800. Sandy 1 was informed by Crown 6 that the effort was to be terminated for the evening, since they didn't have time to get another Jolly in. Crown 6 asked the Misty's to remain in the area and expend the remaining fast movers on station against the gun sites. Sandy's 1 and 2 also remained and, by making dry, low passes, attempted to draw small arms fire which they then expended on. Sandy 1 informed the survivor of the situation and told him to dig in for the night, that we would be back at first light. The survivor said he didn't think he would still be there, but he would try. Misty 41 orbited the area while M-61 and 71 expended Zebra, Flamingo, and the Gunfighters. We remained to advise as to the location of the survivor and the location of the suspected gun sites. The only ground fire directed at the fighters was a ZPU site that opened up on Zebra flight. M-41 marked the site with our last WP and it was hit. No airbursts were observed, and no ground fire at all after the ZPU was silenced. At one point, Misty 41 had to prevent Flamingo from dropping CBU-24 directly on the survivor's position. Misty 41 and 71 RTB'ed at 1900 together.

2. The SAR for the following morning was scheduled for first light. At least two flights of fighters, both Samples - were scheduled to be on station. A frequency was set up to hold and control the fighters on enroute and on the tanker. Misty 11 and 21 were scheduled for 0600 and 0615 take off's and the SAR forces (Jolly and Sandy) were scheduled to be on station at first light. On the morning of the 26th, Misty 21 briefed (Holden/Konopka) at 0400. Prior to going to the aircraft, Blue Chip called and said there was fog in the area and they wanted to hold 21 on the ground, using

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Misty 11 as a weather recce. We requested that the original take off schedule be adhered to in order to start the cycle to have one Misty always in the area. They agreed to this and we launched on time. Misty 11 arrived in the area and obtained voice contact with O2A at 0655. We (Misty 21) arrived in the area at approximately 0715. The weather was clear except for thin patches of ground fog lying in the ravines and low spots. We felt this would burn off as soon as the sun hit it. We passed this evaluation to Crown 4. The position of the survivor was under one of the patches of low fog. I attempted contact at 0725 and was immediately answered by O2A. He stated that he was "O.K. so far". At this time the fog had begun to recede as the sun hit it. In fact, we thought the survivor might be out from under the edge of it. We asked him if he was in the clear or not. He said he was so far down into the grass he couldn't see if he was in the clear or not. We told him to go down on his radio and stay covered, that the Sandys and Jollys were on the way. We assumed that they were, since it was to have been a first light effort and we had passed to Crown 4 that the fog was burning off. We informed Crown 4 that we had contact with the survivor and that he was all right. We stated that there was still a little fog in his immediate location, but that the sun was beginning to reach it and it would be burnt off in 30 to 40 minutes. Crown 4 acknowledged and wanted to know if we wanted Bass flight cleared in, we told Crown we were going for a tanker and to pass Bass to M-11. We departed for a tanker at approximately 0740. At this time M-11 was 20 miles out, inbound from the tanker. We gave a situation report to them and told them that the survivor was to come up on radio again at 0800. M-11 asked if the Jolly's and Sandy's were on the way. We said yes. Crown 4 broke in and said that they weren't, that they were being held on the ground at NKP. Both M-11 and M21 told Crown 4 to launch them immediately and asked why they were not on the way. Misty 11 expended Bass on the gun positions while M-21 was enroute back from the tanker. Misty 21 re-entered the SAR area at approximately 0800 as Bass was finishing up. Approximately 40 to 50 rounds of 23/37mm fire were directed at Bass, however this was the only ground fire directed at anyone on the 26th. Later in the morning, Misty 21 expended Barracuda and encountered no ground fire of any kind. At this time, approximately 0810, Misty 11 asked Crown 4 how far out the Sandys and Jollys were. Crown 4 stated that they were still being held on the ground and they wanted another weather report. He said to pass "exactly what you've got and if we can we will try and get them (Jolly's and Sandy's) airborne". Crown 4 also wanted to know if possibly we might want to expend some more fast movers prior to getting the Jolly's and Sandy's up. We again informed Crown 4 that the ground fog was burning off and that it would be gone long before the Jolly's and Sandy's could get to the area. We again requested an immediate launch for the Jolly's and Sandy's, especially since we were informed that it would take 1Hr minimum for them to arrive. Crown 4 also wanted the status of the ground fire. We informed him that the only known

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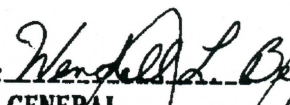

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fire was coming from areas north and south of the survivor at ranges which would not interfere with the actual pick-up. Further, that in the immediate area of the survivor they could expect small arms only and that we would have to rely on the Sandys to locate and suppress it anyway. Crown 4 acknowledged and said he would pass the report to "Queen". Misty 11 went to the tanker at this time, approximately 0815. At 0820 Misty 21 made a pass over the survivors position and raised him on voice. At this time he was still "O.K.". The ground fog was almost completely dissipated by now and the survivor's position was in the clear. We expended Baracuda flight at approximately 0845. Misty 21 remained in the area until 0915 and returned from the tanker at 0940. Upon our return Misty 11 was expending Gunfighter flight. The Sandy's finally arrived at 0945 and began calling Grommet 02A on guard. Misty 11 made pass over the survivor and lit his burner. There was no response. The survivor, 02A, never came up on voice or beeper again, nor did he make any other signal of any kind. The last contact was at 0823 lcl by Misty 21 at which time he was "O.K.". Misty 21 remained in the area while Sandy 1 and 2 flew low over his position and called on guard. At 1100, with the weather in the area beginning to deteriorate as cumulus formed, and with no response from 02A, Misty 21 RTBed to Phu Cat. Mission unaccomplished. Flying time for M-41 on the 25th 9+00; for M-21 on the 26th - 5+00. It is significant to note that; had the Jolly Greens and the Sandy's been launched at 0725 when Misty first discovered that they were not airborne and requested they be launched; they would have been on the scene when the weather went clear at 0820 and when Misty 21 still had voice contact with Grommet 02A.

3. This report has been written with the aid of voice tapes made during the SAR effort by Capt Holden. These statements which are indicated as quotes are taken verbatim from these tapes.

  
CHARLES H. HOLDEN, Capt, USAF  
Commando Sabre Pilot

  
ROBERT C. KONOPKA, Capt, USAF  
Commando Sabre Pilot

Classified by:    
SUBJECT TO GENERAL  
DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE  
OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED  
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED ON  
31 DECEMBER 1976

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68-235



STATEMENT

**UNCLASSIFIED**

1. At 1700 Misty 71 was launched as an extra sortie to help with the Grommet SAR effort. We arrived in the area at 1740 at just about the time the SAR effort was called off because the Jolly had been hit. We directed, or holpen Misty 41 direct, Zebra, Flamingo and gun fighter flight upon gun positions south of the survivor. We RTB'ed with Misty 41 at 1900.

2. On the morning of the 26th we flew Misty 11, arrived in the area and established contact with Grommet 02A at 0655. He stated he was all right. It was still almost clouds in the valleys and we could see fog in the valleys, otherwise the visibility in the immediate area was clear. Misty 21 arrived and we proceeded to refuel. Enroute back to the area M-21 briefed us and we put Bass flights in on suspected gun sites south of the survivor. At this time, 0800, I asked Crown if the Sandys and Jollys were enroute and was told they were being held on the ground at NKP. We requested an immediate launch. I had previously thought the Sandys and Jollys would launch to arrive on scene at daylight because it was to be a first light effort. About 10 minutes later I asked Crown the position of the Sandys and was told they were being held and that they wanted another weather report. Since all my previous weather reports were favorable I said to pass the weather that you have and to launch the Sandys and Jollys. Only our flights of fighters received ground fire and that was Bass who received 40/50 rounds of 23/37mm. At 0820, M-21 made a low pass over the survivor and he came up voice and said he was OK. Since it was going to be an hour for Sandy and Jolly to arrive we expended, or helped, Barracuda and Gunfighter flights. The Sandys arrived at 0945 and started calling Grommet 02A and no contact was ever made. I made a low A/B pass at 0955 with no response. We remained in the area until 1130 and RTB'ed due to weather and no contact with Grommet 02A.

*Clyde Seiler*

CLYDE SEILER, Maj, USAF  
Commando Sabre Operations Officer

*Robert E. Lynch*

ROBERT E. LYNCH, Capt, USAF  
Commando Sabre Pilot

Classified by: *Wendell H. Beyer, Col.*  
SUEJECT TO GENERAL  
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AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED ON  
31 DECEMBER 1976

Classification canceled (changed to  
by authority of *FM 1-R, 1-401*  
by *James Blecher* 11 Dec 78

**UNCLASSIFIED**

**UNCLASSIFIED**

ATCH 5

68-235



STATEMENT

**UNCLASSIFIED**

1. On November 25, I participated in the SAR effort for Gromet 02. Misty 51 was in voice contact with 02A when I arrived. He briefed me on the location of the downed pilot and known 37mm positions in the immediate area, I then left the area to refuel.

2. When I returned, Crown had several flights of fighters available for flak suppression. The first flight to expend received very heavy AAA fire. I estimated 100 air bursts on each pass. Two additional flights were used and the guns appeared to be completely silenced. Shortly thereafter, Sandy arrived on the scene. He made numerous low passes attempting to draw ground fire. When he didn't receive any, the Jolly attempted a pick-up. As he approached a hover he received automatic weapons fire from several locations, forcing him to withdraw with battle damage.

3. The second pair of Jollies were too far away to reach the scene prior to darkness. The SAR effort was terminated for the night. The remaining fighters were expended on suspected gun positions.

4. Comments. The back up Jollies should have been holding much closer to the locations and the survivor. A second rescue attempt could have been made prior to the onset of darkness. As I recall the Jollies were being held 35nm west of the scene.

*Robert J. Fitzsimmons*  
ROBERT J. FITZSIMMONS, Capt, USAF  
Commando Sabre Pilot

*Roger P. Rice*  
ROGER P. RICE, 1 Lt, USAF  
Commando Sabre Pilot

Classification canceled (changed to **UNCLASSIFIED**)  
by authority of *302.1-R, F-401*  
by *James Beckler* *W. H. H. H. H.*

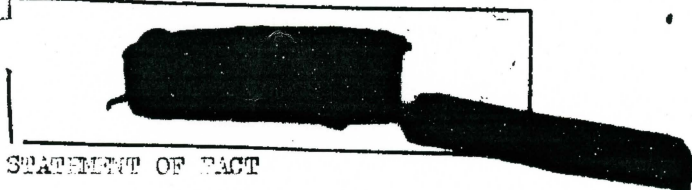
Classified by: *Wardell R. Brown, Jr.*  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL  
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ATCH 4


68-235



  
STATEMENT OF FACT

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Gromment flight preceeded to the target area, RTE 137. At 1244L the flight started its run at the southern point of RTE 137 at 1000' AGL, heading 013° at approximately 1245L Gromment 02 broadcasted, "We've taken a hit." Immediately Gromment 01 broke off the run, climbing to altitude and established that Gromment 02 had been shot down. Gromment 01 stayed in the area until 1322L. Voice contact had been made with Gromment 02-A and probably with Gromment 02-B, by Misty 41.

  
GARY R. CONSTANTINE, Capt, USAF  
FR72510  
Navigator, Gromment 01

Classification canceled (changed to  
by authority of 5001-2, 1-401  
by James Beck me W.D. 4/2/76

## UNCLASSIFIED

Classified by: Wendell L. Began, Col  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL  
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31 DECEMBER 1976

USAF

## UNCLASSIFIED



ATCH 2

68-235



**UNCLASSIFIED**

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

I, John W. Wall, Major, FV2225979 was Aircraft Commander in an RF-4C, call sign, Grommet I, which lead the flight in which Major Morrison and Lt Francisco were crewmembers in an F-4D flying wingman call sign Grommet 2. Grommet 2 reported at approximately 1245L in vicinity of 1720 degrees N 10612 degrees E, heading 013 degrees, altitude 1,000 feet AGL, Ground Speed approximately 540 KTS, that "We've taken a hit". I broke off my reconnaissance run and climbed to altitude. Grommet 2 never climbed to altitude and joined up with lead. A SAR effort was initiated by me, through Harbor Master. No parachutes were observed but a rescue beeper was heard. No voice contact was made by my aircraft with the downed crewmembers. Misty 41 arrived on scene and became the on Scene Commander for the SAR effort. I returned to base as requested by Crown 6 when radio control was made with him.

*John W. Wall*

JOHN W. WALL  
Major USAF  
FV2225979  
Aircraft Commander Grommet 01

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Classification canceled (changed to  
by authority of 5200.1-R, F-401  
by James Beebe 11 Dec 74 gme.

Classified by: Wendell L. Bower, Col  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL  
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DECLASSIFIED ON  
31 DECEMBER 1976  
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ATCH 1

68-235



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF:

USAFMPC (AFPMSC)  
RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS 78148

12 NOV 1969

SUBJECT: Continuance of Missing in Action Status Beyond Twelve Months - Case #345

TO: AFPMC

1. Personnel Involved: Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 10, Title 37, USC, a full review has been made of the facts and circumstances set forth herein to determine whether the missing in action status of the following named personnel may reasonably be continued after a year's absence or terminated by a presumptive finding of death:

Major	Joseph C. Morrison	405-30-2438 FR	Aircraft Commander
Captain	San D. Francisco	535-38-5087 FV	Pilot

2. Circumstances: The personnel listed above comprised the crew of an F-4D aircraft which departed Udorn Airfield, Thailand, at 1156 hours, 25 November 1968, acting as escort for an RF-4C on a photographic reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. At approximately 1245 hours, a message stating, "We've been hit" was received from Major Morrison and Captain Francisco's aircraft. At this time their aircraft was about 28 miles west-southwest of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. The crew members of the reconnaissance aircraft, unable to make visual contact since they were positioned in front of the damaged aircraft, broke off their run, climbed to a higher altitude, and alerted search and rescue forces. Beeper signals were heard; however, no parachutes were observed, nor was voice contact established.

3. Search Efforts: En route to the area, a forward air controller (FAC) heard Major Morrison reply to a radio request for his call sign, and as he neared the area, received a radio transmission from Major Morrison stating he was all right. The reconnaissance aircraft returned to base, and the FAC became the commander of the search and rescue effort. Major Morrison and his parachute were observed near the burning wreckage within 700 yards of an enemy encampment. Several people and a number of trucks were seen in the immediate vicinity. When Major Morrison was asked if he had made contact with Captain Francisco, he stated that he had not heard from him, but he should have gotten out. Attempts were made to establish voice contact with Captain Francisco and two transmissions were received in reply, but since they were extremely garbled, and their location could not be pinpointed, it was impossible to determine their origin. Other aircraft arrived in the area to assist in suppression of enemy fire and rescue operations. Heavy ground fire continued throughout the search. Due to darkness and the hostility in the area, the search was suspended. At first light the following day, the search was resumed and voice contact was established with Major Morrison.

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at which time he stated he was all right; however, a rescue could not be effected due to the dense cloud coverage. When the weather had cleared sufficiently to attempt a recovery, voice contact could not be established. Since search efforts were again hampered by deteriorating weather and no further contact was made, the search was terminated at 1130 hours, on 26 November 1968.

4. Supplemental Information: A Hanoi radio broadcast on 26 November 1968, stated an A-3J and an F-4C aircraft were shot down over North Vietnam on 25 November 1968. The report claimed the F-4C aircraft was downed over Quang Binh Province and its pilots captured. A similar report appeared in an article in a North Vietnamese newspaper, Nhan Dan, on 26 November 1968. Although no names were mentioned, the date, similar type of aircraft, and location coincide with the incident involving Major Morrison and Captain Francisco. In addition to their aircraft, one Navy aircraft was lost over North Vietnam on that date. To date, no further information has been received which would clarify their status.

5. Discussion: An examination of the available information compels the conclusion that a reasonable possibility exists for the continued survival of Major Morrison and Captain Francisco. This conclusion is supported by the recorded evidence which establishes that, although the aircraft was not under observation at the time and no parachutes were observed, beeper signals were heard and radio contact was made with Major Morrison after reaching the ground. It is therefore possible that Captain Francisco was also able to reach the ground, and for unknown reasons was unable to make his presence known. The incident occurred over a heavily populated area and it is logical to assume that they could not have evaded capture for any length of time. The absence of a report establishing their status as prisoners is no indication that such is not the case since the North Vietnamese and their agencies reject any obligation under the Geneva Convention to report the names of our personnel in their custody. Until new evidence is produced or other events occur which overcome this possibility, it is reasonable to assume that they may still be alive and any change in their status on this date may be premature and beyond the safe calculated risk of error.

6. RECOMMENDATION: Pursuant to the authority contained in Section 555, Title 37, USC, and following the mandatory review of all available information on this date, it is recommended that official casualty reports be issued stating that Major Joseph C. Morrison, 405-30-2438 FR, and



Captain San D. Francisco, 535-38-5087 FV, will be continued in a missing in action status following the expiration of twelve months' absence, effective 26 November 1969.

*W Campbell Col USAF*

*for* HENRY B. BRIDGET, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Personnel Services

1 Atch  
List of Source Material

13 NOV 1969

Under the authority delegated by the Secretary of the Air Force to the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel for Military Personnel, or the officer acting in his stead, the above recommendation is approved.

*Robert W. Maloy*  
ROBERT W. MALOY  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Deputy Asst DCS/Personnel for Mil Pers